



RESOLUTION

URGING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE, THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY, AND THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY GENERAL TO EASE VISA RESTRICTIONS FOR THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA.

WHEREAS, China and her people have long been a part of the economy and culture of Hawaii since the first Chinese sugar plantation laborers arrived in the islands in 1852; and

WHEREAS, the first one hundred seventy-five laborers were from Hong Kong bound for Maui—most of them from depression-torn Guangdong and Fujian in southern China; and

WHEREAS, from 1852 to 1876, nearly 4,000 Chinese laborers migrated to Hawaii; and by 1882, these *huaqiao* or migrants made up almost 49 percent of plantation labor, outnumbering Caucasians in the islands; and

WHEREAS, the progeny of these humble but determined Chinese immigrants rose quickly through the ranks of Hawaii's educational, political, and business communities, and would leave lasting impacts on Hawaii and even the world—the most famous of whom is referred to as "The Forerunner of the Revolution," Dr. Sun Yat-sen; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Sun's education at Iolani School and Oahu College inspired him to develop the vision of an educated, strong, and democratic, modern-day China that he would dedicate the rest of his life to building, and would later say that Hawaii was where he "came to know what modern, civilized governments are like and what they mean"; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Sun established the first Chinese revolutionary party, called *Xing Zhong Hui* or Revive China Society, and returned to Hawaii five more times at which time many Hawaii families contributed financially to his cause; and

WHEREAS, the Counties of Hawaii Sister-Cities Summit held this month in Honolulu highlighted the inextricable and historic ties between China and Hawaii with a particular emphasis on strengthening our relationships with Honolulu's sister cities of Zhongshan, Haikou, Qinhuangdao, and Chengdu; and

WHEREAS, the summit demonstrated that China will continue to embrace our open door policy and fortified our understanding of each other's needs in the areas of cultural exchange, economic development, trade, tourism, and education; and



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WHEREAS, recently, members of Hawaii's business and government communities welcomed 271 passengers at Honolulu International Airport from China Eastern Airlines' inaugural direct flight from Shanghai, heralding a new era for Honolulu's economic growth and forging closer ties between the United States and China; and

WHEREAS, the Hawaii Tourism Authority estimates that we will receive over 91,000 Chinese guests in 2011, a 37% increase; and

WHEREAS, the People's Republic of China, with its 1.3 billion people, represents a very large and lucrative pool of visitors, as the average Chinese tourist to Hawaii is expected to spend about \$368 per day, compared to \$275 daily for every Japanese tourist and just \$178 per day, on average, for all tourists to Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, tourism dollars have been identified by the United States Department of Commerce as an *export*, and President Barack Obama's National Export Initiative of May 2010 seeks to double U.S. exports by 2015; and

WHEREAS, China has transformed itself from an impoverished country to the world's second largest economy, and as it grows, continues to have an impact on Hawaii and the globe; and

WHEREAS, China is now a major trade partner with the United States and force for stability and peace in Asia, and has become a world leader in the auto market and the world's largest producer of energy; and

WHEREAS, in spite of the reciprocity between China and Hawaii, the visa application and approval process for Chinese business and tourist travelers is an arduous and often lengthy process which deters many potential visitors to Hawaii and the United States; and

WHEREAS, a Chinese citizen who wishes to visit the United States must appear in person before a U.S. consulate official to obtain the visa but there are only five U.S. consulates in the entire People's Republic of China; and

WHEREAS, due to the small number of consulates and staff to handle the in-person interviews necessary for entry visas, the average wait times for those interviews in China far exceed those wait times in other countries; and



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WHEREAS, one solution to ease this problem is for a country to be admitted to the U.S. State Department's Visa Waiver Program, which allows nationals from foreign countries to enter the United States for tourism- or business-related purposes for as long as 90 days without obtaining a visa; and

WHEREAS, both Japan and South Korea qualify for visa waivers; and

WHEREAS, when South Korea became one of the 36 countries in the State Department's Visa Waiver Program in November of 2008, it boosted tourism to Hawaii from that country; and

WHEREAS, in order for a country to qualify for the Visa Waiver Program, the country must satisfy certain conditions, with the United States government retaining the ultimate discretion to admit the country to the program; and

WHEREAS, one condition for entry into the waiver program is the rate of refusal of a country's visa applicants which must be three percent or lower; and

WHEREAS, the refusal rate for Chinese visa applicants was 13.3 percent as of last year; and

WHEREAS, the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board, a newly created industry group appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, recommended measures that can be taken to increase travel to the U.S. from China, which include: (1) raising the visa refusal rate from three to 10 percent; (2) establishing a maximum wait time for in-person visa interviews of five days; (3) adding four to six visa processing locations and several hundred consulate officers to process visas; and (4) allowing non-immigrant visas to last 10 years for Chinese visitors, which is permitted in other countries; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED by the City and County of Honolulu that it urges the United States Department of State, the Department of Homeland Security, and the United States Attorney General to include the People's Republic of China in the Visa Waiver Program and support the recommendations of the Travel and Tourism Advisory Board to ease visa restrictions and the visa application and approval process for business and tourist travelers from the People's Republic of China; and



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BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the Honorable Hillary Clinton, Secretary of the U.S. Department of State; Secretary Janet Napolitano, Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security; U.S. Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr.; Secretary Rebecca Blank, Acting Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce; China's Ambassador to the United States, 2201 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., Suite 110, Washington, D.C. 20007; the members of Hawaii's Congressional delegation; the Hawaii Tourism Authority; the Director of the Hawaii State Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism; the Asian American Institute, 4753 North Broadway, Suite 904, Chicago, Illinois 60640; the Organization of Chinese Americans, 1322 18th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036-1803.

INTRODUCED BY:

[Handwritten signatures: Bessie, N. A. Arnesen, Eric H. Holder Jr., and M. K. Sam]

DATE OF INTRODUCTION:

SEP 29 2011

Honolulu, Hawaii

Councilmembers

CITY COUNCIL
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU
HONOLULU, HAWAII
C E R T I F I C A T E

RESOLUTION 11-275

Introduced: 09/29/11 By: STANLEY CHANG

Committee: SAFETY, ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AND
GOVERNMENT
AFFAIRS

Title: RESOLUTION URGING THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE, THE DEPARTMENT OF
HOMELAND SECURITY, AND THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY GENERAL TO EASE VISA
RESTRICTIONS FOR THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA.

Links: RES11-275
CR-327

Voting Legend: Y= Aye, Y* = Aye w/Reservations, N = No, A = Absent, ABN = Abstain

SAFETY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS	10/11/11	CR-327 – RESOLUTION REPORTED OUT OF COMMITTEE FOR ADOPTION.
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COUNCIL	11/02/11	CR-327 AND RESOLUTION 11-275 WERE ADOPTED.		
ANDERSON Y	BERG Y	CACHOLA Y	CHANG Y	GABBARD Y
GARCIA Y	HARIMOTO Y	KOBAYASHI Y	MARTIN Y	

I hereby certify that the above is a true record of action by the Council of the City and County of Honolulu on this RESOLUTION.


BERNICE K. N. MAU, CITY CLERK


ERNEST Y. MARTIN, CHAIR AND PRESIDING OFFICER